THE

RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. IV. November 18, 1938 Heshvan 24, 5699 No. 14

Editorials

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE JEWISH SCHOOL

DR. KINGDON ON THE MINORITY PROBLEM

The Jewish Community Comes of Age

By SIMON SHETZER

The Progress of Reconstructionism

By IRA EISENSTEIN

Published by

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM

15 West 86th Street, New York, N. Y.

READ

in this issue

The Progress of Reconstructionism

You will then want to

HELP

The Progress of Reconstructionism

We are anxious to organize throughout the country groups of FRIENDS IF THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST. If you are interested in organizing such a group in your city to help in the reconstruction of Jewish life on a sound basis, write to us and we shall send you the names of others in your locality who subscribe to our paper and have shown an interest in our movement.

Do not wait for others to act.

Do it yourself.

Do it now.

Organize FRIENDS OF THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST.

SUBSCRIPTION BLANK

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST,
15 West 86th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Please send me THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST for.....year(s).
I enclose check for $.....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

Subscription: $1.00 a year.
Foreign, $1.25.

THE
RECONSTRUCTIONIST

Vol. IV. November 18, 1938 Heshvan 24, 5699 No. 14

EDITORIAL BOARD

MORDECAI M. KAPLAN, Founder

Managing Editors

IRA EISENSTEIN, EUGENE KOHN

Associate Editors

Michael Alper — Samuel Dinin
Ben Zion Bokser — Abraham G. Duker
Israel S. Chipkin — Samuel C. Kohs
Mortimer J. Cohen — Milton Steinberg

The RECONSTRUCTIONIST is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues starting in October, by The Society for the Advancement of Judaism, 15 West 86th St., New York, N. Y. Subscription $1.00 a year; foreign $1.25; individual copy 10 cents. Entered as second class matter January 9, 1935, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

The editorials represent the opinions of the editors only.

200

EDITORIALS

Collective Bargaining In the Jewish School

A NUMBER of Hebrew schools are today beset with labor troubles. In some schools the point of conflict is the demand on the part of the Hebrew Teachers Union for certain minimum wages for teachers. In others it is the demand for arbitration in the case of teachers unjustly dismissed. In almost all instances the real problem is recognition of the Teachers Union and of its right to collective bargaining. The lay directors are disinclined to deal with the Union and want to negotiate merely with the local school staff. Even some of the rabbis in the schools involved have become increasingly irritated over the tactics and the activities of the Teachers Union in their schools. Strikes have been called, the schools picketed, pressure exerted on important people in the community; letters have been written to the press and to the parents of the school-children; and these pressure tactics have not made the feeling between teachers, rabbis, and lay directors more amicable. Some schools have preferred to shut their doors rather than submit to the demands of the Union and others, after deferring the opening of the school, have had to engage non-union teachers.

The opposition of the lay directors is understandable. Some of them are conservative business men who are opposed to unions generally and deal with them only when they must. All of them, however, feel that unions and collective bargaining are in general not in place in professions like teaching, and are particularly out of place in Jewish schools, which are non-profit making institutions whose support depends on the work and the contributions of these very directors. They are naturally distressed that they, who are called upon to give up so much of their time and money for the schools, must also become involved in conflicts which sap their energies and create ill-feeling among all concerned. The irritation of the rabbis is due to errors in tactics, timing and judgment on the part of the Union, the receipt of letters written not in the best of taste, whose effect is to nullify rather than to mollify, and to the behavior of some of the union representatives, which, so it seems to the rabbis, is in many instances unwise, if not unethical.

There is no doubt that the Union has committed some tactical blunders, born out of the heat of controversy and conflict and out of distress and inexperience. But we should not permit personal irritation and unpleasantness and even tactical errors to obscure the real issues involved. And these issues are very plain and simple. Have teachers in Jewish

schools a right to organize? Has the Hebrew Teachers Union the right to bargain collectively for its members in a Jewish school? Should arbitration be granted when teachers are summarily dismissed?

We do not see how it is possible to offer any answer other than an affirmative one to each of these questions. The right to organize and the right to collective bargaining have been written into the law of the land. Teachers in public schools have been organized for many years and the American Federation of Teachers is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Public schools, too, are non-profit making institutions. The lay directors may be philanthropic and benevolent gentlemen but in regard to the teachers, they are employers as well. The directors and teachers may have common problems and tribulations in trying to conduct Jewish schools in this country. For the directors, Jewish education may be an avocation: for the teachers it is their only source of livelihood. Where are they to go if they are unjustly dismissed? What are they to do if their salaries are cut inequitably? Their only strength is in their union and their only recourse is to arbitration. We are unaccustomed to the idea of unions in Jewish schools and to collective bargaining in Jewish education, and the very novelty of the idea arouses opposition. But it is an idea to which we shall have to become accustomed or else we shall have to see Jewish schools become increasingly involved in bitter disputes which will cause incalculable harm to the cause of Jewish education.

Of course there are many schools which are not opposed to unions and collective bargaining; the directors simply cannot find any way of getting additional funds to meet the increased budget. And there are many directors who feel they are being unduly victimized in having their schools selected for experiments in collective bargaining. They point to other schools where smaller salaries are paid and where collective bargaining has not been established. These complaints and others are just, but very little can be done about them especially at the present time. The present impasse is due to two circumstances: to the fact that there is no organized system of Jewish education and no organized control, and to the additional fact that the directors, the employing group are not themselves organized and articulate.

The present conflicts in the Jewish schools should make all the more imperative the immediate creation of an organized system of Jewish schools, communally controlled. Teachers should not have to be beholden to benevolent individuals here and there for their livelihoods. They should receive their salaries from the Jewish Community as a whole, as of right and not as of sufferance. They should be entitled to the same protection that other labor and professional groups receive. Merely because we today lack an organized employing group with whom the teachers can bargain collectively or a system of Jewish schools in which their role will be similar to that of the public school teachers in the community at large, we are not justified in denying to them the right to protect their status and their standards and to fight for the improvement of their situation. If there is any detriment to Jewish education in the present situation in which teachers are organized for collective bargaining and the employing institutions are not, the responsibility for remedying that situation rests clearly with the employing institutions.

Dr. Kingdon On The Minority Problem

THE atrocities perpetrated against helpless minorities in Germany and other totalitarian states must give alarm to all intelligent men of good will and impress them with the dangers inherent in totalitarianism to all that people who live in democratic countries understand by civilization. With the rise of Germany to the hegemony over Europe that menace as-

sumes world-wide dimensions. Little wonder that our best minds are perturbed by it!

Among those to whom the situation gives grave concern is Dr. Frank Kingdom of Newark University, who has come forward with a suggestion that deserves not only serious consideration but prompt execution. He sees in "the way in which any majority treats its minorities. . . . a measure of the standard of civilization that majority has attained," and he perceives correctly that "basic to majority and minority rights alike are the more comprehensive rights of all men as human beings." In a letter to the *New York Times,* published in its issue of Sunday, November 6th, he urges a concerted effort to preserve democracy on the part of all those leaders of thought who still cherish the decencies and humanities of a truly civilized society. The men who stand at the head of those institutions which totalitarian states seek to suppress should take counsel together and initiate a powerful movement to implement democracy and make people aware of the dangers that confront it in the modern world. This would include the leaders of "all religious groups, because of their emphasis of the worth of men in the sight of God and the inalienable right of every man to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience; all educational institutions, because of their faith in the power of free minds to explore and master the truths of the universe; all humanitarian institutions, because they proceed on the clear policy of dealing with all men in need at the points of their need and without reference to color or race or creed; and all institutions dependent upon public opinion, because the breadth of that opinion must in the end fix the limitations of their activities." Dr. Kingdon further suggests that the call to such a conference be issued by the President of the United States.

We believe that this proposal is both timely and practical. People who live under a democratic regime find democracy under ordinary circumstances so normal, healthful and all-pervasive that they are hardly aware of it, just as they are ordinarily unaware of the air they breathe although they cannot live without it. But when there is danger of the atmosphere's being poisoned by a gas attack of malicious propaganda, it is time to sound the siren of alarm. That is the situation in our day. The rights of the individual are today challenged by strong organizations of men who are interested in exploiting their fellow men, as these rights have not been challenged in generations. Changes in technological processes have made necessary corresponding changes in social structure and procedure, and there is grave danger that in the initiation of these changes, the principle of democracy be lost sight of or be sacrificed to the material advantage of one group or another in the population. New thought must be given to the problem of safeguarding democracy in our rapidly changing world. Since the defense of the rights of men demands the intelligent and courageous assertion of these rights, men must be taught anew how they are to act to conserve their liberties without infringing on the liberties of others. Through extensive propaganda and intensive education we must seek consciously to recover that ardent devotion to democracy which characterized the revolutionary movements that gave birth to the democratic governments of the western world. Democracy must become militant (but not militaristic) by invading new areas of economic and social life. Surely the concerted efforts of intellectual leaders of movements that are dependent on democracy for their very existence must avail in helping democracy face its present crisis.

We hope that Dr. Kingdon's recommendation will receive earnest consideration from the President. But if, under the pressure of the many other urgent appeals to his attention, President Roosevelt fails to act on the suggestion, this should not doom the project to failure. Its merits are such that, even without the benefit of President Roosevelt's prestige

in calling the conference into existence, it should nevertheless be launched. Should Dr. Kingdon himself undertake to issue invitations to a preliminary conference, he ought have no difficulty in finding collaborators among the leaders of all those groups that he has mentioned. There is a rabbinic addage to the effect that, when a man begins a meritorious act, he is urged to see it through.

The Jewish Community Comes of Age *

By SIMON SHETZER†

THE several Jewish communities of America are coming of age. The past quarter of a century has witnessed a consolidation of the various aggregations of Jewish population, who, released from the current impacts of successive waves of new immigration, have had the opportunity to adjust themselves to their new milieu. The suspicions and antagonisms which separated the new settlers from those who had preceded them have slowly disappeared and we have seen the gradual coalescence of these frankly hostile groups. Contributory to the elimination of the barriers which made for separatism within the Jewish group, have been the boom era of the 20's and the depression years of the current decade. The former provided the more recent immigrants from Eastern Europe and their sons with a larger measure of prosperity and an economic security approaching that of the more established generations; the levelling down process of the recent catastrophic depression has served to wipe out the more exaggerated economic and social distinctions between the two groups. Added to these factors, has been the growing awareness and apperception, particularly on the part of those Jews who had lost their historical perspectives, of the common fate of all Jews and of an ever widening area of identical interests.

Never before in our history have the forces of evil and intolerance seemingly conspired to close in upon the Jew on so many fronts at one and the same time. Anti-Semitism in earlier centuries was almost always a sporadic and isolated manifestation. And fortunately, too, there were always havens of refuge for the person of the Jew and sanctuaries for his spirit. Anti-Semitism today appears to be organized on an international basis. There is hardly a Jewish community anywhere in the world that has not been touched by the contagion. With the world converging upon the Jews from every direction and with practically every avenue of escape cut off, the Jew finds himself hemmed in on all sides and compelled to return to his own people for protection and comfort. In a world turned cold and hostile, the Jew seeks warmth and shelter within the intimate confines of his own group.

World events have hastened the maturation of the Jewish community of America. Russian Jewry stands completely outside the main stream of Jewish life. The gradual undermining of the economic basis of Jewish life in Poland culminating in its almost complete collapse, the sudden tragic destruction of German Jewry and, more recently, of the great Jewish community of Austria, have transferred the hegemony in Jewish life westward across the Atlantic to the Jews of America. The unprecedented demands upon American Jewry for funds to relieve the distress and to help rehabilitate and reconstruct Jewish life in Eastern and Central Europe have added immeasurably to our responsibilities. The acceptance and discharge of these responsibilities have quickened our consciousness of unity and solidarity. The almost universal accept-

*Delivered at the Reconstructionist Summer Institute, Cejwin Camps—Port Jervis, New York, September 4, 1938.

†Mr. Shetzer is the president of the Jewish Community Council of Detroit.

ance of Palestine by all Jews as the major solvent of Jewish homelessness and alienage has had its own considerable influence in removing another of the divisions in Jewish life and has afforded additional opportunity for cooperative effort on behalf of a common objective.

All these factors have contributed to the "coming of age" of the Jewish communities of America. Having arrived at the estate of maturity, there have appeared recognizable stirrings within our Jewish communities, a searching after opportunities for self-expression and avenues for self-fulfillment. New and changing needs and responsibilities seek more harmonious and appropriate instrumentalities through which to discharge themselves. The widening area of common interests and the compelling need for intelligent collective action within this area have turned our attention to the agencies which are available and to a critical examination of their adequacy to perform the tasks to be undertaken.

I

The oldest institution in Jewish life and the chief visible symbol of the historic continuity of the Jewish people is the Synagogue. For centuries, this citadel of Judaism was the focal point toward which all of the interests and activities of Jews gravitated, the secular no less than the religious and spiritual. The Synagogue was the centripetal force drawing within its orbit every interest and concern of the Jew, who was, at every moment of his life, inhabited by and informed of its spirit. The Synagogue (regretfully it must be said) no longer serves as the all-embracing and unifying force in Jewish life. We do not in America have this Synagogue which we have just described. We have many synagogues or, as we may more properly say, many congregations. These congregations represent varied and divergent approaches to and interpretations of Judaism—Orthodox, Conservative and Reformist. They represent, too, the various social and economic stratifications in Jewish life and often, particularly among the Orthodox, a continuing attachment to old country loyalties. This is evidenced by the fact that in our larger cities we find synagogues described as the Russian, the Hungarian, or the Galician *Schul.* Obviously, the Synagogue, as we know it in American Jewish life, is more of a divisive force than one designed to build unity. In their social and cultural aspects these congregations represent competitive rather than cooperative relationships and, therefore, it is not the Synagogue to which we can turn as the central focal institution about which to organize an all-inclusive community life.

The unique contributions of American Jewry to Jewish institutional expression have been the Welfare Federation and the Welfare Fund, which have, in the brief period of approximately forty years, achieved a commanding position in Jewish life. Evidence of the rapid acceptance of this form of organization is to be found in the record compiled in the directory recently published by the National Council of Federations and Welfare Funds, where there are listed some 207 Federations, Welfare Funds, and Federations with Welfare Fund functions. Of this total number, 34 were established in the period of 1931-1934 and 89 in the four years from 1935 to 1938 inclusive. The Federation and the Welfare Fund were originally designed to serve the philanthropic needs of the Jewish people and, in the main continue to do so. They were organized to coordinate the various charitable appeals and social service institutions, to raise the required financial resources more economically, to administer the distribution of the funds more efficiently, with a minimum of duplication and waste, and to supervise and direct the community's social planning, without attempting to infringe upon the jealously-guarded autonomy of its constituent agencies. This reservation with regard to the autonomy of the individual agency has given rise to many difficult situations for which no completely happy solution has yet been found.

The Federation has rendered note-

worthy service within its designated field of activity. It has broadened the community's program of social service, including in the larger communities every institution serving the health, the family welfare, the child-care, the aged and indigent, the homeless and transient, the recreational and, in some cases, even the educational agencies. It has elevated the standards of social service and of personnel. It has raised far larger sums for the support of Jewish philanthropies than were formerly raised in the many competitive campaigns and appeals. A by-product of no small importance has been its experimental value in the realm of joint enterprise and cooperative endeavor. It has, to a not inconsiderable extent, aided in overcoming many of the antipathies and prejudices and the strongly sectional consciousness on the part of the various segments of the community. It has changed the emphasis from the particularistic point of view of the institutional or agency-minded to the larger and more inclusive point of view of the community as an entity.

With this record of achievement in broadening the base of community support for its social service agencies, of decreasing the rivalries and frictions within the community, of transmuting the emphasis from the particular and the sectional interests to the single community interest, why is not the Federation the ideal and ultimate form of organization for the American Jewish community that has arrived at the age of maturity? There are several answers to this legitimate query.

In the first place, a completely unified and integrated community can never be predicated upon a program of philanthropy alone. Charity is one, but only one, of the many interests which Jews share in common. Philanthropy is a noble profession but it is neither the highest nor the complete expression of Judaism.

Secondly, philanthropy by definition is a divisive and not a unifying force. Philanthropy separates a community into two unequal groups, benefactors and beneficiaries, donors and recipients. You cannot build an integrated, harmonious, cooperative community life on the basis of a relationship which necessitates division into two separate groups distinguished by the enjoyment of privilege or by the lack of it. Federation as an instrumentality for the administration of philanthropy is, thus, a paternalistic agency for the service of the underprivileged and the denied, not an agency, organized in the spirit of self-help, to serve the needs and requirements of its own membership, to resolve its own conflicts, and to engage in the processes of its own self-fulfillment.

In the third place, Federation, in the beginning, constituted a self-appointed and self-renewing body, largely representative of the older German group, whose principal qualification for position of board member was, and in many cases continues to be, the possession of wealth, the capacity to contribute substantial sums to charity (a capacity not always exercised in adequate measure), professional or business standing and social prestige. There was no effort at the beginning to make Federation a democratic body directly responsible to the community and responsive to its needs. It should be observed that serious efforts have been made in recent years in some communities to democratize Federation. Individuals have been selected to represent other groups in the community not originally included in the organization, but they continue to be hand-picked and are not the direct selection of the community itself. Many of the leaders of Federation are still from that group in Jewish life which clings to the anarchronism of *shetadlanut,* either rejecting the validity of the democratic process or, when accepting it, denying its applicability to the organized life of the Jewish community.

The fourth deficiency of Federation is the self-imposed limitation of scope. The primary and, in many cases, exclusive concern of Federation still continues to be in the field of social service and philanthropy and the raising and distributing of funds. Except as subventions are provided

through the Welfare Fund for agencies and institutions in other fields of activity, the whole complex of cultural, economic, civic, national, and spiritual interests of the Jewish group are outside the area of Federation's concern and are reserved to a host of unrelated and independent agencies and sponsors, or are not served at all.

II

To meet the changing and growing needs of a community that has come of age, whose self-respect and demonstrable capacity for thinking and acting for itself and providing its own responsible and responsive leadership refuses to accept the paternalism of a self-designated leadership (no matter how benevolent its intentions and achievements), and which recognizes that a vast area of interests is not being served adequately by present agencies, there is developing a new type of community organization—the Community Council.

Motivated, perhaps unconsciously, through two decades, by the educational program of the American Jewish Congress directed toward the democratization of Jewish life, which, in turn, was largely inspired by the democratic organization of the World Zionist movement, and under the impact of that American democracy whose manifold manifestations we experience daily, there has arisen in many quarters a more or less articulate demand for the creation of an integrated Jewish community, thoroughly representative of all of its component elements. Such a community, its advocates urge, shall concern itself with the totality of Jewish life and experience, not merely with one or two of its departments, and shall be organized and administered in complete consonance with the democratic principle and process.

The pattern which the Community Council has already assumed would indicate, too, that some of its inspiration derives from the Polish and Lithuanian *kahal,* the memory of which has not been altogether obliterated from the minds of the last East European immigrants. Whatever else we may think of Jewish life in the ghetto, we must concede that its community organization constituted, as it has been so well described, "a social organism of remarkable psychological stability."

We can understand, therefore, the earlier attempts to establish an exact counterpart of the *kehillah* in some American cities. The lack of success of these earlier *kehillot* was due, doubtless, in some measure to a failure to recognize that a social organism, to be vital and effective, must be indigenous to the environment in which it is created and must be directly responsive to the specific needs of the particular group whose expression it is. The vigor of the Federation and Welfare Fund certainly derived in part from this characteristic. It would be necessarily fatal to any form of community organization if we attempted to transplant in every detail a social organism no matter how admirable in its native habitat, neglecting to take into consideration the variations in environment and *Anschauung.*

No form of community organization can ever be superimposed upon an unwilling or an unprepared social group. Community organization viewed intelligently is both the product of evolution and a continuing evolutionary process of acceptance and rejection, of trial and error, of change, adjustment and adaptation, in response to the dynamic forces of life which are forever acting upon the social group and its constituents.

III

The Detroit Jewish Community, with which I am most intimately identified, several years ago reached that stage in its evolutionary development where the establishment of the particular form of community organization described as a community council became almost inevitable. A brief kaleidoscopic picture of that development as it took place in Detroit is worth recital here, not because it is necessarily typical of the experience of all American Jewish communities, but

because of the illumination it throws upon the process of growth and development in a community of Jews that now numbers between 70,000 and 75,000.

In 1923, a comprehensivs survey of the Jewish community was conducted by the Bureau of Jewish Social Research. At that time there were only five organizations functioning with community support: the United Jewish Charities, engaged in family welfare and recreational and educational (largely Americanizing) activities; a YWHA; a summer camp for underprivileged children conducted by the Fresh Air Society; a small overcrowded clinic; and the Hebrew Free Loan Association with a revolving fund of $15,000. These organizations were each independently affiliated with the Detroit Community Fund, receiving at the time in the aggregate $117,000. In addition, there were a number of organizations not affiliated with the Community Fund, supported by the Jewish public through independent appeals: the Hebrew Orphan Asylum, the Old Folks' Home, the United Hebrew Schools and a number of women's organizations of limited size, engaged in relief work of one kind or another.

The survey strengthened the desire already felt in many quarters for more effective organization of the community forces and for improvement of service in different directions. The time was auspicious for a union of forces. A number of non-local philanthropic enterprises were submitting appeals for financial aid. At the same time, several of the local agencies were sorely in need of additional capital funds. It was decided to unite their objectives in a single appeal to cover their various needs in the total sum of $150,000. The campaign was not only a financial success, but gave indisputable proof that the various elements in the community were aware of their common interest in the several objectives assembled under single auspices and were capable of organizing a united effort, despite long-standing antipathies and prejudices.

A permanent organization, uniting the various elements, followed logically upon this event in 1924 and took the form of the Jewish Welfare Federation. Because of the direct affiliation of a number of important agencies with the Community Fund, there was evolved what we call a "double-barreled" type of Federation, permitting the normal relation of these organizations with the Community Fund to continue unimpaired and at the same time providing for comprehensive support of Jewish activities outside of the Community Fund, both local and non-local.

The United Jewish Campaign of 1926 in which $740,000 was pledged and allocated over a three year period, (the largest portion designated for relief in Eastern Europe) was further striking evidence that the Jewish community was eager and prepared to unite all its resources for philanthropic and educational purposes. In the meantime, drastic changes were effected internally in the United Jewish Charities. In order to improve its social services and to increase the participation of active lay workers, the organization was divided into three affiliated units. One continued to be known as the United Jewish Charities, but was shorn of all functional activities. It is today purely a property-holding corporation. The second is the Jewish Centers Association engaged in recreational and character-building activities, with which, at a later date, the YWCA was merged. The third unit, the Jewish Social Service Bureau, engaged in family welfare work as well as in the care of dependent and delinquent children. Subsequently, the latter function was separated and vested in a Child Care Council.

By 1932 the Federation included in its constituency thirteen local social service agencies and the United Hebrew Schools. By 1938 the number of causes included in the Allied Jewish Campaign, which is our Welfare Fund, conducted by the Federation, had risen to 52, divided among local, regional, national and overseas agencies and institutions, serving a continuously expanding sphere of community interests: social service, educational, recreational, civic-protective, cultural, for-

eign relief, and national needs of the Jewish people.

In 1930, the United Palestine Appeal, which hitherto had been conducting its own independent drives, was included in the Allied Jewish Campaign, giving, for the first time, community-wide recognition and support to the Zionist program for the rebuilding of Palestine as the national home of the Jewish people.

During the depths of the depression, several interested groups had opened a Kosher Kitchen, where homeless and transient Jews were served a meal for five cents. After operating as an independent agency for two years, Federation effected a merger of the Kosher Kitchen with the *hakhnasat orhim,* several of the leaders of this project being added to the directorate of the House of Shelter.

In the Fall of 1935, representatives of Jewish organizations set up an Emergency Conference to conduct a boycott of German goods and services and engage in other anti-Nazi activities. From this evolved the League for Human Rights with a non-sectarian sponsoring committee. Federation leaders had not only withheld their blessings from this enterprise but had disapproved of it in unequivocal terms. By the Spring of 1936, Federation had unanimously approved a substantial budgetary allowance for the League.

Prior to 1937, the American Jewish Congress had never received a subvention from the Federation although this had frequently been requested by the national office of the Congress and representations had been made on its behalf by local adherents of the Congress movement. For many years the American Jewish Committee and the Wider Scope of B'nai Brith, including the Anti-Defamation League, had received regular annual allotments. In 1937, the Congress was admitted for the first time, on a basis of parity with the Committee.

In 1936, the three Yiddish school systems, which on several previous occasions had been denied inclusion, were allowed subventions. Two thousand dollars were allocated among the Arbeiter Ring Schule, the Farband Schule and the Sholem Aleichem Folk Institute—a very nominal amount, we will all agree, hardly more than a token or a symbol, yet a very convincing token of a new attitude on the part of Federation leadership and one symbolic of a new and significant orientation in the administration of communal affairs.

In the Winter of 1934-35, a demand, spontaneously generated among the Yiddish-speaking masses, was crystallized for the erection of a new home for the aged indigent to replace the original Old Folks' Home which had become wholly inadequate. This event is important in the history of the community because it was the first substantial folk pressure which compelled Federation to recognize the voice of the Jewish masses, heretofore unaffiliated with and non-participating in Federation. As a consequence of several conferences between representatives of Federation and of the interested Jewish organizations, it was decided to include a Building Fund in the 1935 Allied Campaign. The whole sum was not raised and another Building Fund item was included in the 1936 Campaign. The Yiddish-speaking groups, through their interest in this specific project, were brought within the penumbra of the whole program of Federation. The number of subscribers to the Allied Campaign, which in 1934 had been 4,752, an increase from 3,300 in 1933, rose as a result of the 1935 Campaign to 8,063. That this substantial gain was permanent was evidenced by the 8,235 contributors in 1936, 9,908 in 1937, and the record list of 13,374 subscribers as of June 18, 1938, a four-fold increase in five years.

A similar experience of group pressure influencing Federation action was the demand, which had been accumulating over a period of two decades for the erection of a Jewish Hospital, a pressure again originating with the masses, although continuously prompted by the Jewish physicians. In response to this demand, Federation in the Spring of 1938 decided to finance a comprehensive survey of the

medical and hospital needs of the Jewish community.

One other such experience is worth reporting. In 1937, the Federation of Polish Jews had requested an allotment in the Allied Campaign. Refused by the Welfare Federation, they conducted an independent drive after the conclusion of the regular campaign. In 1938, they again sought inclusion. The Budget Committee, supported by the Federation Board of Governors, believing that the allocation to the Joint Distribution Committee did not permit the inclusion of the American Committee Appeal for Polish Jews, denied the request. Nevertheless, the feeling in many quarters that the apportionment of the total JDC budget emphasized the needs of German Jewry to the disadvantage of Polish Jewry would not be downed. This feeling, whether in the premises valid or not, was real. In recognition of and in deference to this feeling, the Campaign included in addition to the usual appropriation to the JDC, a specific item of $5,000, earmarked for Polish Jewry, to be remitted directly to Poland through the JDC. In this manner, Federation again met an insistent demand from sources outside its own immediate ranks.

These several instances which I have here recorded are significant as indicating a growing articulateness on the part of the community and the necessity under which Federation leadership found itself of yielding to these emerging forces of strength and conviction.

In cataloguing the various experiences through which the community passed, through which process new sources of strength were captured for an ever-widening community program of philanthropy, mention should be made of the Detroit Service Group of the Welfare Federation. This Service Gorup, which was originally made up of those who participated as lay leaders and workers in the 1925 Campaign, had grown into a permanent organization of some 1,000 members who were charged with the whole responsibility of planning, budgeting, programming and conducting the annual Spring Allied Campaigns and of supervising and directing the collections all the year round. To maintain the interest of its members and to enlist new workers, functional committees were set up to educate the community with respect to the various needs of the Jewish people as expressed through the agencies and institutions, beneficiaries of the annual drives. Here again new and unsuspected interests were made apparent, latent leadership was discovered, fresh and untouched sources of support were brought to light.

During the negotiations that had resulted in the inclusion of a new Home for the Aged in the 1935 and 1936 Campaigns, the need for a broader form of community organization than was offered by Federation was frequently discussed by the Yiddish-speaking groups. These discussions supplemented programs previously urged by the nationalist-minded elements, chief among them the Zionist and Congress groups, the latter of which was seriously entertaining the establishment of a community council under the aegis of the American Jewish Congress.

This demand for a community council had not gone without notice by Federation. The more alert among its lay and professional leaders had become fully aware of the widening base of Federation support, of the emergence of new leadership, of the gradual shifting of the center of gravity and the balance of power from the top of the community down into the folk itself and of the compelling necessity of giving adequate communal recognition to the forces that had come of age and had already shown an earnest of their capacity to share in community burdens. Federation was prepared to cooperate in promoting the establishment of a community council. In the Campaign of 1936 Federation included an item of $3,000 to engage a professional who had received his education at the Graduate School for Jewish Social Work, to enter into the task. A study was made of the community councils in other cities, particularly

in Cincinnati and Cleveland. A report was made to the Board of Governors, and unanimous approval was given to proceed with organization. A committee of seven Federation representatives was appointed to cooperate with a similar number from the 'committee of twenty-one' which had represented the Yiddish-speaking groups in the original Old Folks' Home negotiations. To these fourteen were subsequently added seven persons designated by the local chapter of the American Jewish Congress. These twenty-one constituted the provisional committee on organization and were thoroughly representative of all sections of the community. Considering the connotations involved in the formation of a community council and of the challenge to Federation's position of primacy in community leadership implicit in the creation of this new community organization, the intiative which Federation assumed under the circumstances is a tribute to the intelligence and vision of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit, which I am here happy to record, as well as a splendid expression of *noblesse oblige,* on the part of its veteran leaders.

(To be concluded)

The Progress of Reconstructionism*

By Ira Eisenstein

THE whole story of Reconstructionism is a brief one. The movement, if we can call it a movement, came into existence with the publication, a little over four years ago, of Dr. Kaplan's "Judaism as a Civilization." Up to that time, the ideas which form today the foundation of Reconstructionism were being preached and taught by Dr. Kaplan, and were seeping down to the masses of Jews by means of rabbis, social workers, educators and laymen who came into direct contact with Dr. Kaplan. But up to four years ago, there was very little written material to carry the message. With the publication of the book, we may say that the movement actually came into existence, because the publication of that book led to the organization of the Reconstructionist magazine. Between May 1934 and November 1934, enough stimulation had been generated by the publication of the book to lead to the formation of an Editorial Board for the purpose of applying to contemporary events the analysis and interpretation formulated in general terms by Dr. Kaplan in "Judaism as a Civilization."

For the first time we had a blue-print of what we wanted Jewish life to be like, and the magazine was intended to describe the extent to which a discrepancy existed between what was and what ought to be. We have published this magazine now for three and a half years, and in the course of these years we have raised our subscription list to about 2000. I have no idea how many people actually read the magazine. I dare say there are some among the two thousand who do not read it at all, but on the other hand, there are undoubtedly some families to which the magazine comes whose four or five or ten members read the magazine. The Reconstructionist comes to any number of libraries, Hillel Foundations, YMHA's, Seminaries, Community Centers, where the number of readers per issue cannot be properly estimated. When you consider, for example, that many readers utilize

*This address continues the Proceedings of the Reconstructionist Summer Institute. It was delivered at the opening of the morning session on Monday, September 5, 1938.

the editorials and articles in THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST for sermonic material, or study group material, you can understand that, from time to time, some of our work reaches out to four or five hundred people at one stroke. I should say that perhaps 30 or 50 thousand individuals are indirectly influenced by our magazine from week to week and from month to month. I say this because in addition to the channels of influence that I have mentioned, there are others. For example, very often articles or editorials of ours are reprinted in the Anglo-Jewish press —sometimes with our permission and sometimes without,—and although we like to get credit as often as we can, we feel like printing on top of our masthead: "Please reprint whenever possible."

While the magazine has been published, books have been appearing. Almost everyone of our staff members has published in book form valuable material, which, although published without the imprint of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, nevertheless carries the message of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST. Dr. Kaplan's first volume has already run through two printings, and, incidentally, "Judaism as a Civilization" is now out of print. "Judaism in Transition" is now being sold out. "The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion" is Dr. Kaplan's most recent work. Then there are Rabbi Steinberg's work, Dr. Dinin's, Dr. Bokser's, Rabbi Kohn's, my own, etc. There is no way of estimating just how far-reaching the influence of these books is. Sometimes we read articles or hear addresses which quote us almost verbatim. Sometimes the language is different but the ideas are unmistakable. I think we have succeeded in doing what Dr. Kaplan has very often called "articulating" and giving intelligent direction to a course of events which was bound to happen anyway. The course of Jewish history was forcing Jewish life into these channels, and we are merely making the Jews of America conscious of that process. By being conscious of that process, they are enabled to facilitate it and keep it on the right course.

The spoken word has also helped us to spread the message, and some of us have travelled considerable distance speaking of Reconstructionism, either using it as our avowed subject, or using another subject and actually preaching Reconstructionism. This has brought the word of Reconstructionism to tens of thousands of people throughout the country. A new encyclopedia which is in the process of preparation has taken cognizance of our movement, and we now have in the hands of its editors an article on Reconstructionism, as one of the movements within Jewish life. Formerly it was Reform, Orthodox and Conservative; today it is Reform, Orthodox, Conservative and Reconstructionist. Those who agree with us, and those who do not, running the whole gamut from Dr. Philipson in his "History of Reform Judaism" to Rabbi Jung in some of his papers on contemporary Jewish life, all take cognizance of Reconstructionism as a bona fide movement in Jewish life.

It has always been our hope that Reconstructionism would not merely become another faction, to add to the already over-multiplied factions in Judaism, and for the last two years we have wrestled with the problem of how we can effectively propagandize Reconstructionism without suffering from the limitations of organization. We have not elected officers; we have no specific membership dues, nor membership privileges. As a matter of fact, since the publication of Dr. Kaplan's book, we have not had a meeting or a convention which approached the nature of an organizational function until this one which we are now attending, and even here I think the most careful observer would be hard put to it to identify who is president, who is secretary, and who is treasurer, and who are members and who are not. Even if you pay your dollar for registration, you are not expected to assume any obligation, and if you have not paid your dollar and you attend our sessions, you are in as good standing as

anybody else. You see it is a paradox. That is one of the problems which I should like to discuss here this morning.

I think our progress has on the whole been as satisfactory as one could expect with this nebulous kind of organizational set-up that we have. Up to now the only institution that has assumed any official responsibility for our work has been the Society for the Advancement of Judaism. We feel, I mean the S.A.J. as well as myself, that the time has come when the responsibility should be broadened, and this is another problem upon which I hope you will throw some light this morning.

Thus far I have spoken about the progress of the Reconstructionist movement., and Reconstructionist leadership, and the publication. I should like to say a few words, however, about the progress of Reconstructionism as such; in other words, the progress of its ideology. When you examine the various points of our platform, I think you will realize that we have made a great deal of progress. Whether it has been due entirely to our own efforts, or, as I mentioned before, to the logic of events, is very difficult to say. But whether through our efforts or through the logic of events, we look with great pleasure and favor upon the developments as they have occurred. For example, the first plank in our platform, the rebuilding of Palestine. You must certainly agree that a great deal of the opposition to Zionism is rapidly being dissipated. I do not want to go into each of these at any great length, but I just want to indicate how each of our planks is being adopted.

Secondly, community development. Certainly, the development that we heard about in Detroit and twenty-one other cities is a sure indication that this philosophy of community-mindedness and community organization is making headway, and that the future lies with this type of organization.

Education: I could not give you exact facts, exact details, but I think we will agree that there is a trend toward maximalism in Jewish education. The Sunday schools are intensifying their programs. There is an increased interest in Jewish education both elementary and adult. The number of forums and lectures and adult classes and institutions has multiplied tremendously in the last five or ten years. Education consciousness, I think, is definitely on the rise.

Fourth: what we call culture, or the esthetics of Jewish life, is also on the increase. There was a time not so long ago —we must be reminded of it because we are so prone to forget—when the Jewish dance did not exist as a conscious art; when Jewish music was limited to *hazanut* and to folk music, which was gradually being dropped and forgotten; when Jewish art was almost non-existent; when Jewish drama, Jewish theatre, was limited to the Yiddish theatre and to musical comedy and cheap melodramas. Today there are hundreds of instances of dramatic groups and dance groups and arts and crafts groups. The whole emphasis upon the esthetic articulation has increased, not to speak of the vast increase in the amount of Jewish literature in the English language, which has characterized the last fifteen years. I remember as recently as ten years ago when there was hardly a book that one could put into the hands of young people which they could respect and look up to, and by means of which they could get some notion as to the problems of Jewish life and the nature, the internal character of Jewish life. Today we have scores of novels, scores of historical books, drama, and poetry; and the classic literature is beginning to be made available. I do not mean to imply that there is not a tremendous amount that has to be done, because there is, and you shall hear in a few moments what we feel ought to be done—but there has been a development in that direction.

In the field of religion I think the least progress has been made. The trend has unfortunately been away from the synagogue, and if there has been a return to

the synagogue it has been less a return to worship than a return to all the other things which I have mentioned thus far. If people have come back in numbers to the synagogue, it has been because of the esthetic, the literary or the dramatic or the social, and rarely for worship itself. But we, I believe, intuitively felt that the return to religion ought to be preceded by a clarification of religion, a reorientation to the whole nature of religion, a new understanding of what the function of religion was, and I think in Dr. Kaplan's "Meaning of God" and in the book for young people which is now appearing by myself, and in articles in THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, we have made a beginning toward such a clarification. One of our greatest tasks is to revitalize religion.

As far as the last plank in our platform, which deals with the reconstruction of the social order, I have a feeling that the younger element among our people have outrun us. They have gone far beyond our expectation. We hoped to make them social minded, and to develop a social consciousness and sensitivity. Events have succeeded far better than our feeble effort, but we want to channelize that impulse too. We want to help young Jews today to formulate a conception of social change which will not be inimical to all the rest of our platform, which will not deny the validity of religion and of Jewish organization on community lines, of Palestine, and of Jewish culture. That remains for the future of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST movement.

In order to summarize, I would say that, in each aspect of the Reconstructionist philosophy, we have made excellent progress, and that progress leads me to believe that we are on the right track, and that if any program for Jewish life is to succeed today, if it is at all possible for any Jewish life to exist which is worthwhile, Reconstructionism has the formula. If Reconstructionism and all that it implies does not succeed, then it is my belief that there is no hope at all for Jewish life. This then is the report of what we have done, the accounting of our trusteeship.

(The discussion at the Summer Institute on the future of Reconstructionism will appear in our next issue.—Eds.)